

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

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REP. MARKEY: “NEW REPORT HIGHLIGHTS BUSH ADMINISTRATION’S FAILURE TO PROTECT U.S. WILDLIFE REFUGES”

*Defenders Report Identifies 10 Most Endangered Wildlife
Refuges, Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Tops List*

Washington, D.C. – Today, Representative Edward J. Markey, a senior member of the House Resources Committee, responded to a report issued by Defenders of Wildlife highlighting the 10 national wildlife refuges most at risk. The report, *Refuges at Risk: America’s 10 Most Endangered National Wildlife Refuges 2005*, details the 10 refuges which face current funding crunches, development proposals or threats from Republican lawmakers. Not surprisingly, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska continues to be at the forefront of this list.

“This report highlights the Bush Administration’s failure to protect U.S. wildlife refuges. 10 national wildlife refuges are now in danger, facing critical threats as a result of this Administration’s incompetence,” said Rep. Markey. “Ever since President Theodore Roosevelt established the first national wildlife refuge in 1903, our national wildlife refuge system has served as our country’s number one resource for protecting and conserving our nation’s wildlife and wild places. We must take action now to ensure that these endangered national wildlife refuges do not become extinct,” Rep. Markey concluded.

The report highlights the crippling operations and maintenance concerns that threaten many of the nation’s most precious refuges. Nearly 200 refuges have no on-site staff, limiting the nationwide goals of monitoring wildlife populations, preventing education programming and ending critical projects that address habitat restoration.

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is atop the list of refuges identified in the Defenders’ report. The Arctic Refuge faces threats from big oil companies and the Republican Congress determined to sell the pristine land to drilling companies. The Republican Congressional leadership is attempting to use a budgetary backdoor maneuver to ram legislation through the House and Senate that would open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for drilling.

“We must continue to tell the Republican leadership in Congress that it is unacceptable to take the extreme and unnecessary action of destroying America’s most untrammelled, untouched, unsurpassed refuge in order to reduce gas prices by one cent 20 years from now,” continued Rep. Markey. “By allowing drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, we are giving a green light to the oil industry to set any of the other 544 refuges in our national wildlife refuge system as the next target in their crosshairs.”

For more information on how Representative Markey’s work to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and our entire national wildlife refuge system check out: <http://www.house.gov/markey/> for a copy of the report check out: <http://www.defenders.org/>